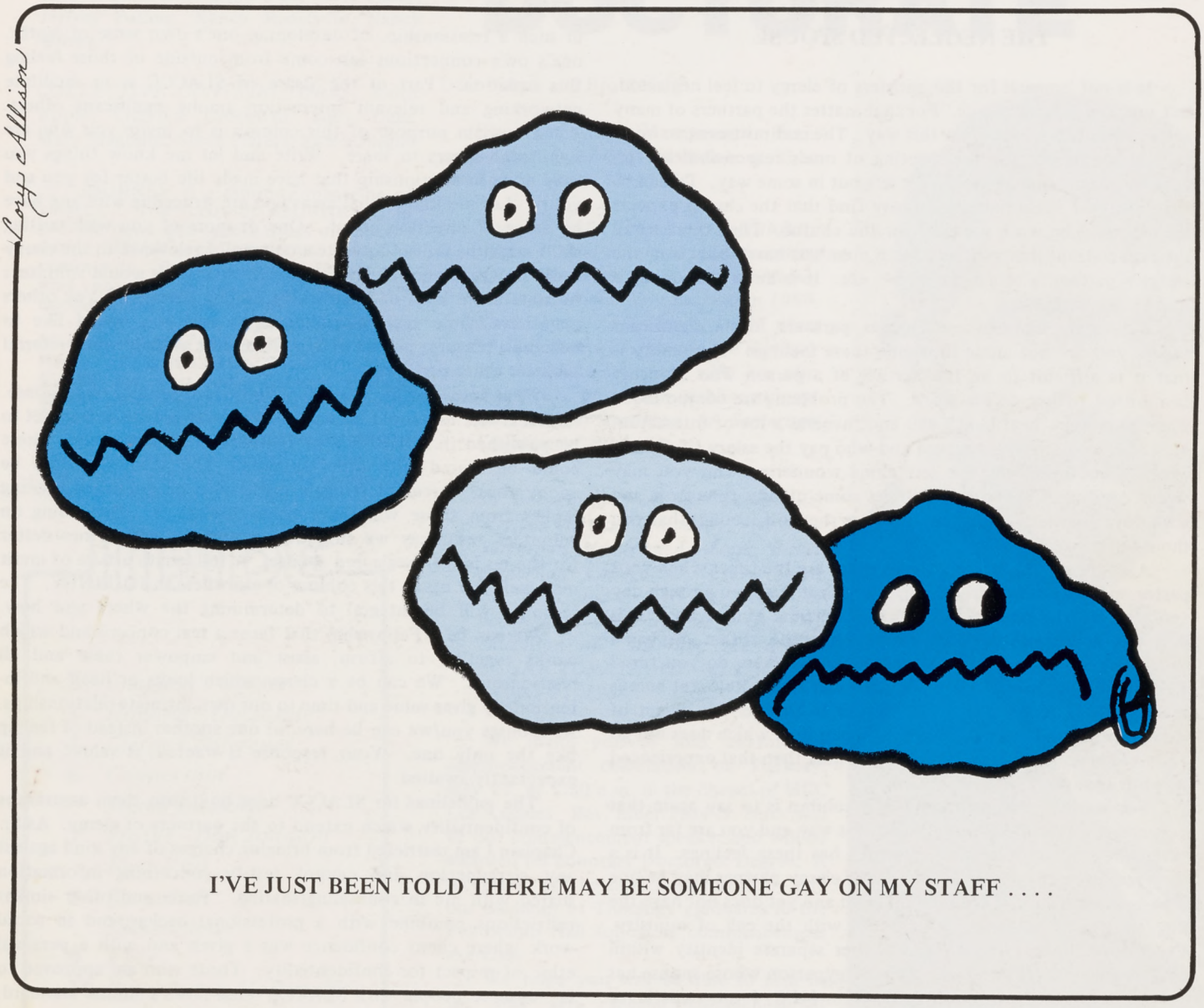
journey

MAY 1984



I'VE JUST BEEN TOLD THERE MAY BE SOMEONE GAY ON MY STAFF . . . .

CHAPLAIN'S CORNER

by Nancy Radclyffe

Collective Writer and Senior Chaplain

THE NEGLECTED SPOUSE

It is not unusual for the partners of clergy to feel neglected, left out and second choice. For that matter the partners of many active lay leaders often feel this way. The committment to one's call is so intense that the meeting of one's responsibilities frequently means that the spouse is left out in some way. To add to this, many of these partners in love find that the church expects them to also be work partners for the church. Then there are all the expectations that various church members have about how the clergy's partner is to act, dress, be, etc. It is more than many a spouse can bear.

If you are one of these spouses, partners, lovers, significant others you are not alone in having these feelings. The reality is that it is difficult to be the partner of a person who is highly committed to her or his work. The problems are compounded when that work is at God's call and involves a lot of interaction with the people who are served and who pay the salary (if there is one). Too often you are left alone wondering who you may safely confide in, when you will get some quality time from and with your partner. And then, there are the guilt feelings that you should not feel this way.

As if all of this is not enough there are the times when your pastor spouse gets unfairly dumped on, or it has been a rough day and you are the one to comfort and reassure him or her. This you may do despite the fact that you hurt too or that you had a rough day. Who is going to comfort you? Where do you turn? When is it your turn to get your need met first? Relevant here is the pain you feel when your partner is hurt, is the object of hatred, is misunderstood. That is a deep hurt which does not go away easily and which may be a deeper hurt than that experienced by your spouse.

For starters, the purpose of this column is to say again that you are not the first spouse to feel this way and you are far from being the only spouse who currently has these feelings. It is a very real problem and concern. Your clergy partner may be one who is more aware of the phenomenon and yet does not have the key to always balancing your needs with the call of ministry. Even those lovers who have a clearer separate identity within MCC feel neglected at times. As a clergyperson whose spouse has a very definite identity and call within MCC, I too experience times when I am second fiddle to her work.

Acknowledging and naming this reality are only beginnings. SLACCC is here to minister to significant others as well, to be a resource that gives confidentiality as high a value as you do, to simply listen when all you really need is someone to listen. It is unrealistic to believe, however, that concrete helps in connecting in such a relationship, of developing one's own sense of worth, one's own connections can come from outside of those feeling this isolation. Part of the vision of SLACCC is to facilitate networking and relevant interaction among significant others.

The main purpose of this column is to invite you who are significant others to share. Write and let me know things you have done in relationship that have made life better for you and yours. Let me know what areas you are struggling with and have no sense of direction about. One or more of you with writing skills might be moved to write a column of relevance to the clergy spouse. Maybe another with organizational skills would volunteer to start some kind of networking among partners. Yet others may have some real counseling skills and you would like to become a resource person of SLACC and be available on a referral basis for other partners.

What I envision has several possibilities depending on response. "Success stories" could be compiled into an article or booklet to be published in JOURNEY or INSIGHTS or separately. These could be shared with other spouses. The accounts could be anonymous. Areas of struggle might also be published inviting replies from those who have been through it. Depending on volunteer resources we might even end up with a newsletter for the no longer neglected spouse. A full length article of merit may well end up in this column or elsewhere in JOURNEY. The response will be integral to determining the where and how.

We can be a Fellowship that faces a real concern and which works together to affirm, assist and empower these and all relationships. We can be a clergy which looks at itself and intentionally gives value and time to our own intimate relationships. As spouses you/we can be here for one another instead of feeling like the only one. Your response is wanted, is valued and is expectantly awaited.

The guidelines for SLACCC have built into them assurances of confidentiality which extend to the partners of clergy. As Sr. Chaplain I am restricted from bringing charges of any kind against any clergyperson and cannot testify concerning information shared with me in counseling/sharing. These and other similar restrictions combine with a professional background in social work where client confidence was a given and with a personal ethic of respect for confidentiality. Those who are approved to be resource people with SLACCC must meet a similar standard.

Write to: The Rev. Nancy Radclyffe
Spiritual Life and Clergy Care Center
P.O. Box 691566
Los Angeles, CA 90069
SLACCC number is (213) 465-4227.

journey

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COVER: Cory Allison

PERRY TO RECEIVE HONARY DOCTORATE

Dear Sisters and Brothers,

The Samaritan Management Team passed the following resolution at their meeting on March 13, 1984:

The Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry faithfully pursued God's call in the founding of the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches in 1968. Since that time he has given 15 years of dedicated leadership in the ministry of this denomination. He has also graciously given his public support and faithful guidance to Samaritan Educational Ministries.

In recognition of his exceptional service in God's ministry, we, the Samaritan Management Team, direct Samaritan College to bestow upon the Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry, in accordance with the state code of education of California, the degree of DOCTORATE OF MINISTRIES on May 22, 1984.

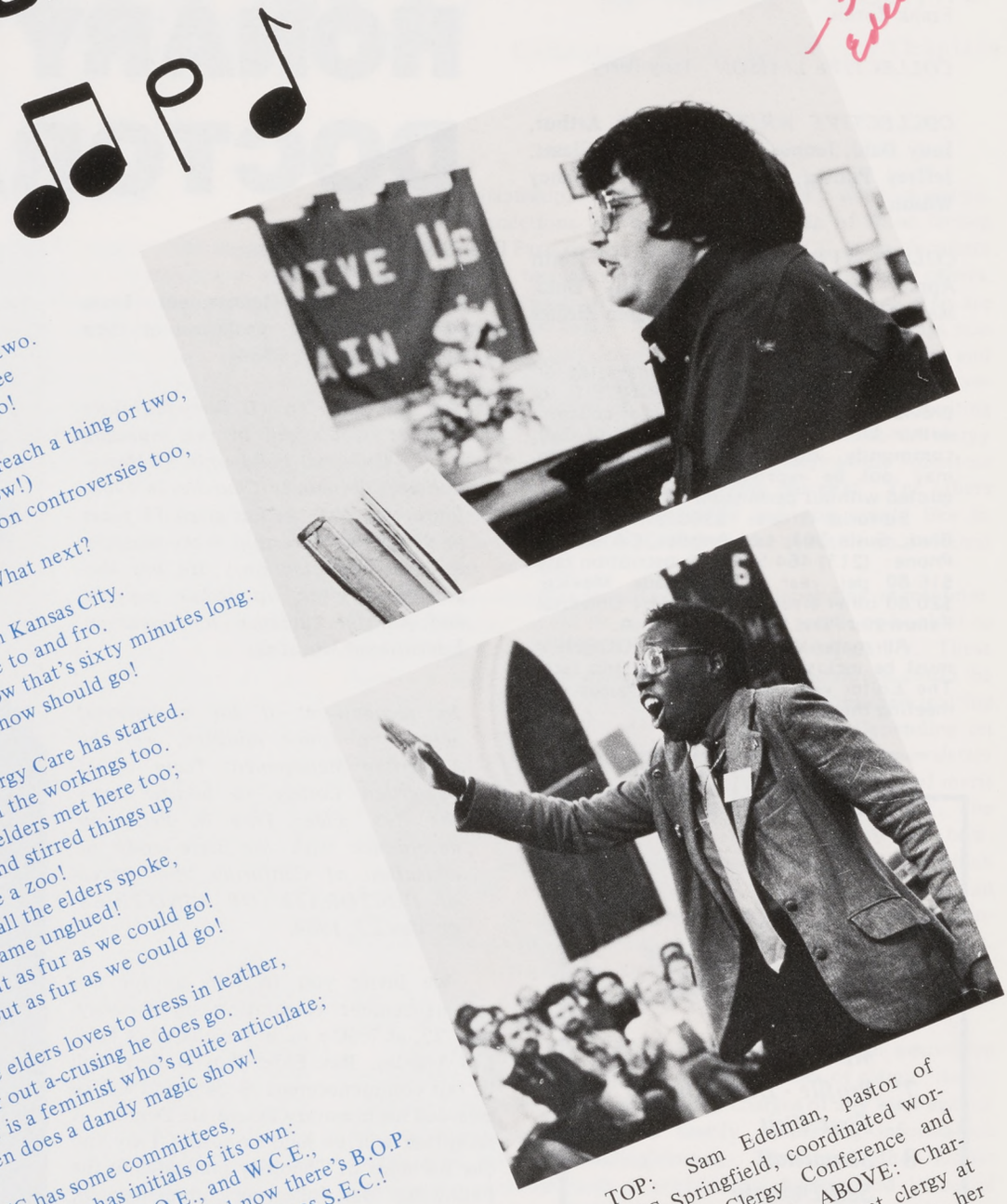
We invite you to join us for our commencement celebration on Tuesday, May 22, at 7:30 p.m. in the chapel of MCC Los Angeles. Rev. Elder Troy D. Perry will be our commencement speaker and will be awarded his honorary Doctorate Degree. A reception will be held honoring Troy and our Bachelor of Theology graduates in the Fellowship Hall following commencement exercises.

We hope you will be able to join us for this very special commencement celebration.

Yours in Christ,
Rev. Sherre L. Boothman
Dean, Samaritan College

Rev. Elder Troy Perry

Clergy Conference



Words by Steve Pieters
Clergy on Staff
MCC in the Valley
Melody: "Kansas City"
by Rodgers & Hammerstein

I got to Kansas City on a Monday;
By Thursday I had learned a thing or two.
'Cause up to then I didn't have an idee
Of what this Fellowship is coming to!

Reverend Shelley Hamilton did preach a thing or two,
(A controversial sister in the know!)
The Board of Elders briefed us on controversies too,
And UFMCC's new TV show.
What next? (Yeah, what?) What next?

1 Everything's up for grabs in Kansas City.
The clergy meet and argue to and fro.
They even have a TV show that's sixty minutes long:
About as long as a TV show should go!

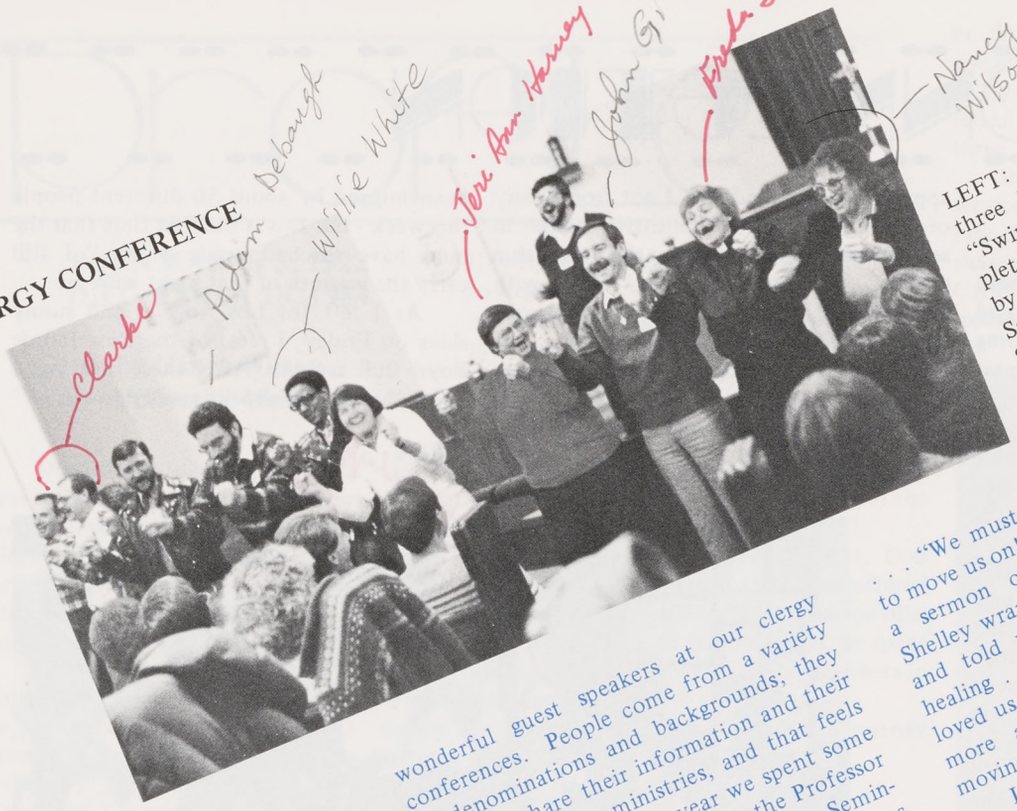
Spiritual Life and Clergy Care has started.
A Pension Fund is in the workings too.
FFO and GSS and elders met here too;
Then we arrived and stirred things up
And it all became a zoo!
Then Troy and all the elders spoke,
And we all became unglued!
We went about as fur as we could go!
We went about as fur as we could go!

2 One of the elders loves to dress in leather,
Whenever out a-crusing he does go.
Another is a feminist who's quite articulate;
She even does a dandy magic show!

UFMCC has some committees,
And each one has initials of its own:
There's C.C.C.C., B.O.E., and W.C.E.,
And F.F.O., and G.S.S. and now there's B.O.P.
And S.E.M. was S.T.I. before it was S.E.C.!
We've gone about as fur as we can go!
YAY, GOD!
We've gone about as fur as we can go!

TOP: Sam Edelman, pastor of MCC Springfield, coordinated worship for Clergy Conference and played the piano. ABOVE: Charlotte Strayhorne, student clergy at MCC Cincinnati, sings from her heart at Clergy Conference. Photos by Bev Teagle.

CLERGY CONFERENCE



LEFT: District Coordinators and three Elders sing their version of "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" complete with "sign" language. Photo by Cindie Dalton. BELOW: Tex Sample, professor of Church and Society at St. Paul's Seminary was the guest speaker at Clergy Conference. Photo by Bev Teagle.

REAL PEOPLE

by Judy Dahl
Southwest District Coordinator

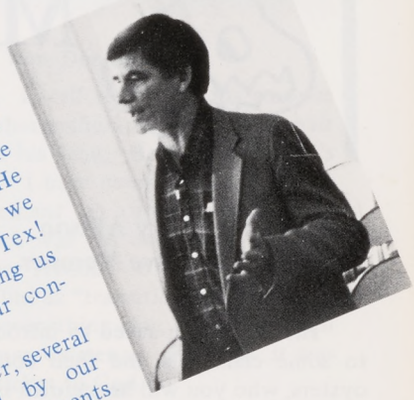
While the city was paralyzed with one of the worst imagineable ice storms, we gathered inside MCC Kansas City for our annual clergy conference. The week before, many of us had come together for GSS, FFO, Board of Elders and CCCC meetings, so by the time the second week rolled around many of us were chipping the ice storm from our lives and all ready for warmth from a new set of folks! I guess I can't let it go by to mention my favorite time of sharing. Sunday evening, wedged between the first and second gatherings, a group of us got together for what turned out to be an all night slumber party for many. In the midst of our favorite ghost stories, the ice storm reacted and the lights went out! John came running down the hall into the arms of Nancy who helped to ease his fear. Later, back at the women's gathering, it was a rare treat to find Jeri in her most lovable form, five years old, and Freda and Sherre and Marianne and Jennie and Jan and Pat and Jamie and Jo and Betty and Nancy and Judy coloring and playing jacks! (The above last names are being withheld to protect their sweet innocence).

Monday morning it was time to gather up our adult selves and engage in the activities of clergy conference. It's a very rewarding experience to find so many wonderful guest speakers at our clergy conferences. People come from a variety of denominations and backgrounds; they come to share their information and their support for our ministries, and that feels good, real good. This year we spent some great time with Tex Sample, the Professor of Church and Society at St. Paul's Seminary (United Methodist) located in Kansas City. The theme for the clergy conference was "Planning For the Future." Tex was certainly the right person for this theme and for our clergy. He had a talent for sharing information and entertaining all at the same time. Tex has a first love . . . baseball! He is basically a story teller, and shares every bit of information wrapped in a story. Being a lover of baseball, many of his stories were related to the sport. At one point he stated, "I believe if God had wanted us to play basketball, She would not have made baseball bats, balls and gloves." Not only did he use humor well, but he also was incredibly conscious of meeting people where their lives are. He took great care to include all persons. He was kind and funny and warm and we learned a lot from him. Thanks Tex! Thanks to you too, Jeff, for finding us such good resource people for our conferences!

Aside from the feature speaker, several other workshops were offered by our people. I heard many fine comments about all of them. Nancy Radclyffe and Kerry Brown offered workshops along with open forums from FFO and the Pension Plan.

As is often the case, our worship services were real highlights for the conference. Willie White preached one of the finest sermons I have ever heard. Basically he called us out of our comfortable place and to hear again the call of God to Abraham . . . "We must respond to God who calls to move us on!" Shelley Hamilton preached a sermon of healing Tuesday evening. Shelley wrapped us up in her untiring arms and told us about her journey and her healing . . . and then she told us that she loved us and called us out to love and heal, more and more. Both sermons were moving and important in their telling.

I left for home early Wednesday morning, before the conference ended. As I sat in the airplane, I was reminded of a comment Tex made during his presentation. He said . . . "Real people don't want to make history, they want to make life." Maybe we didn't make history in Kansas City that week, then again, maybe we did; maybe the ice storm wasn't even history, though it seemed that it was, but for sure, we made life!



CONNECTION

by Ravi Verma
Director of Administration

UFMCC Conferences have always been a wonderful mixture of excitement, hard work, sharing with old friends and meeting new ones! The latest conference in Kansas City was certainly all that and more!

Many of us experienced difficulty in getting to Kansas City and it almost seemed that there were forces that did not want us to be there. However, once we all arrived the Spirit moved in a mighty way!

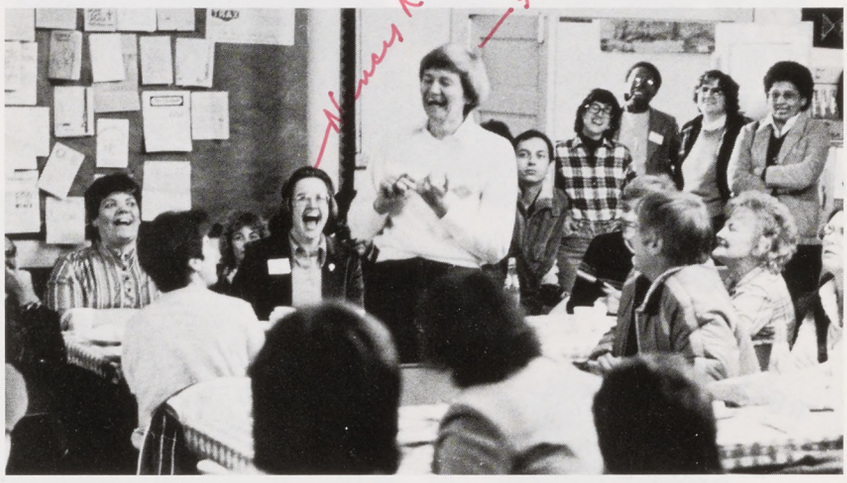
From all accounts, the meetings (BOE, GSS, FFO, CCCC) were extremely productive and the Clergy Conference itself was even better. Throughout the week many of us marvelled at and experienced the growing maturity of our Fellowship in the ways in which we worked, played, argued and worshipped together. I'll especially remember the GSS jingle and the Rev. Steve Pieters 'Ode to Kansas City.'

Attending the Elders meeting and spending time with many of our clergy was very rewarding for me. As I work in the Fellowship Offices, it is easy to feel isolated from the Fellowship at large. I truly appreciated the feedback I got from many of you regarding the positive change in services from and attitude at the Fellowship Offices. I shared with my staff, with excitement, all of that along with your suggestions for further improvement.

Another important time for me was the men's sharing night. About 15 of us got together to laugh, sing, listen and hold each other. As one of the men said, "I've been hugged by about 50 different people this week - but this is the first time that the hugs have reached inside of me." I still carry the warmth of that night with me.

As I left for Los Angeles and sunny skies on Friday, I recalled the Rev. Jennie Boyd Bull saying, "After these meetings I *know* that all is well with our Fellowship!"

AMEN.



Clergy respond with laughter as Rev. Elder Freda Smith talks during time set aside for the Elders to share. Photo by Bev Teagle.

Mixed Blessings

by Cory Allison
Collective Member

Hi! I've been asked to introduce you to some clam folk and their cousins, the oysters, who you will henceforth be finding in the monthly issues of *JOURNEY*.

First, this all came about because of a mutual interest that Jennie Johnson, a member of MCC in the Valley, and myself have in fossils. One evening, in the very recent past, Jennie brought 'Oscar' with her to Samaritan for me to view. As he stared up at me with a snaggle-toothed grin, I *had* to grin back. I just couldn't control it! Oscar is a very funny clam even at the age of 1,300,000 years!

And so, within the next couple of days,

Oscar begat the Crusty Crustaceans,
who begat the Crusty Clams,
who begat the MCC Clams
who begat the Christian Clams,
who begat the 'MIXED BLESSINGS'
in our lives.

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Profile

BORN MARCH 3, 1922
DIED MARCH 18, 1984

by Nancy Wilson
Collective Writer

Donald E. Johnson, or "D.J." as he was known by his friends and parishioners over the years, came to the ministry of the Universal Fellowship after a long and prestigious career in both the United Methodist Church and the National Council of Community Churches.

Don received his B.A. degree from Butler University in Indianapolis, IN, and went on to complete his B.D. degree (today known as an M. Div.) from Garrett Seminary in Evanston, IL. He pastored Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ) and Methodist Churches until he went to the Union Church of San Juan, Puerto Rico in 1959. This was an experimental ecumenical Protestant church that was connected with the National Council of Churches. From this post, he returned to the mainland to pastor the prestigious Jensen Beach Community Church in Jensen Beach, FL until 1977. During his tenure there, he served two terms as the President of the National Council of Community Churches, an organization about the same size as the Universal Fellowship is today (they belong to the National Council of Churches).

Don had many gifts - most notably his inspiring and widely regarded preaching abilities, his far-reaching pastoral care skills, and talents in community leadership.

Don came out as a Gay person quite late in life and his transition out of the closet, out of the mainline church and in M.C.C. was not always an easy one. The help of a senior MCC clergy and Elder, John Hose, who had made the same journey, was a great help. MCC Tampa nurtured and loved Don through his time of healing and change. He is fondly remembered by many from the Tampa church. My own first personal contact with Don was during the embryo days of our "Department of Ecumenical Relations." Don was someone whose experience and expertise as a national ecumenical leader, as head of a communion, was invaluable. He helped formulate our earliest ecumenical strategies.

Don's first pastoral calling in UFMCC took him out of the United States to Sydney, Australia. During his time as pastor there, Don helped the Sydney church grow and gain a new sense of its mission. He was also Ordained into the ministry of the Universal Fellowship at the Houston General Conference in 1981.

Due to his illness from cancer, Don returned to the States in 1983, and offered his pastoral services to MCC Jacksonville, FL. After giving all that he could, he spent his last few weeks with family members in Alabama.

God be praised for his life and journey and that it included us.

by Deacon Cliff Connors
MCC Sydney

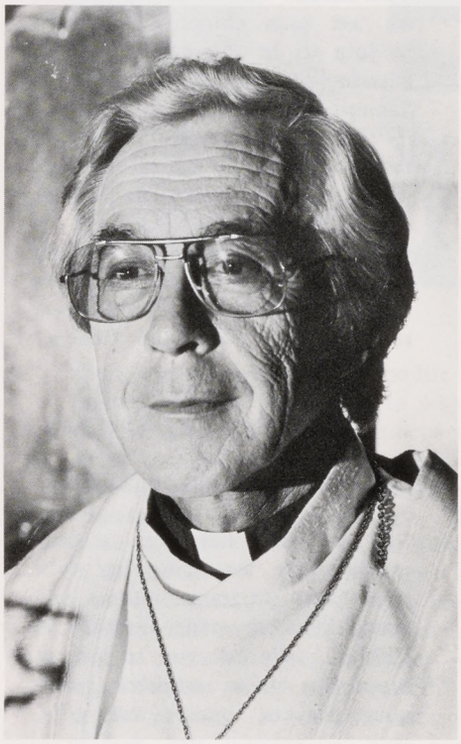
After an active ministry spanning 36 years in two continents, Rev. Don Johnson died from cancer on March 17 in Birmingham, Alabama, aged 62. Don, affectionately called "D.J." by his friends, spent his last days quietly with his spouse, Chris, in whose arms he died.

Don is succeeded by two children: Karna, a 33 year old social worker with a Masters in Child Development, and Kraig, 31, a Medical Practitioner. It was to Kraig that D.J. turned when he sought treatment for his cancer in the U.S.A.

An indefatigable worker, Don created many valuable ministries in Sydney. He lectured in prisons, visited the sick and dying, conducted group-growth and encounter sessions, dialogued with members of the Uniting Church synod, established Canberra-MCC, encouraged Gay Christians as far away as the Phillipines, as well as presiding over a rich range of MCC-Sydney activities.

Don was also a patron of the social wing of the Church, often appearing at Gay venues and enjoying himself, much to the horror of the puritans in our community. For many, D.J. made the ministry accessible to all without distinction. He was instrumental in developing a large and fortified pastoral staff to whom he often ministered with fatherly affection. His fruitful ministry also saw a steady growth in the quantity and quality of our congregation. It is a testimony to his pastorate in Sydney that his successor, Jim Dykes, found the church in a very healthy state three months after Don's resignation.

In recognition of his outstanding services, Sydney-MCC bestowed on him the rare title of Pastor Emeritus, an honour he shares with Sydney's first pastor, Lee Carlton. His humour and joviality were undaunted even by the drastic treatment



Rev. Don Johnson

for cancer. I well remember his surprise when the chemo-therapy had caused hair loss only on his head. He remarked: "It's just as well! I have never seen adverts for hair replacement on other parts of the body." Such was the calibre of his faith that he never referred to his condition as "terminal" but as "transitional." For Don, death, like everything else, was an integral part of human existence. For him, it was his passage-ticket to God.

We who knew and loved this extraordinary man grieve his absence. He brought much joy and love into our lives, inspiring and encouraging us to be better people through the example of his own life-style. We are the richer for his having walked part of the way to God with us. He is still with us and encouraging our efforts "on the other side" of existence.

A memorial service was held at the Village Church, Oxford Street, Paddington at 7:30 pm, April 8, 1984.

Samaritan Sunday

One Sunday in May of each year, MCC's all over the world celebrate our Fellowship's educational ministries by dedicating a worship service and an offering to Samaritan Educational Ministries. This year we ask each church community to join us in this celebration by choosing a Sunday in May as Samaritan Sunday.

This year each MCC will receive a brochure which describes our current programs and a bulletin insert which gives the Dean or Executive Director of each Division and their address. Worship resources are available free of charge upon request from Samaritan College:

Samaritan College
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard
Suite 104
Los Angeles, California 90029

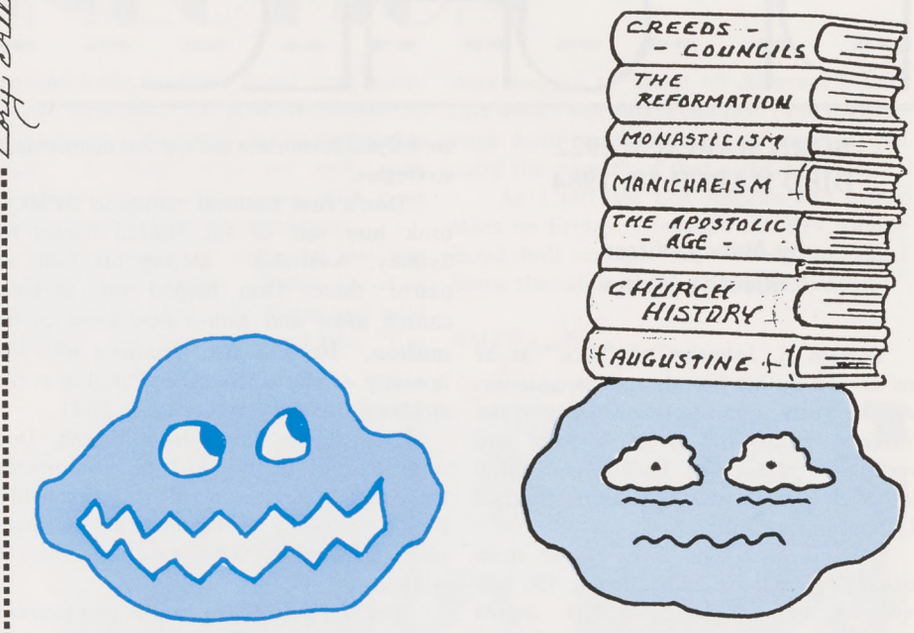
This year has been a very exciting one for Samaritan with several new programs, courses, and materials being made available to UFMCC. We ask you to join in supporting these ministries with your prayers, praises and gifts.

JOURNEY
TO GET
NEW LOOK

In keeping with the other major improvements at the Fellowship Offices, *JOURNEY* Magazine will display a vital, new look in the future. The typesetting will be done on our new IBM Displaywriter, a computerized word processor. We are hopeful that the mechanics of producing *JOURNEY* will be greatly streamlined and less time consuming, leaving us more opportunity to concentrate on the quality and content of *your* Magazine. Enjoy the new look!

Mixed Blessings

Cory Allison



LET ME GUESS. YOU'RE TAKING DEAN BOOTHMAN'S COURSE

S-E-L-F D-E-F-E-N-S-E

What to Do After an Attack

* Get medical attention if you need it from the nearest hospital emergency room. Many states compensate victims for injuries sustained during a crime. Find out what benefits you are entitled to; do not let any personal financial constraints prevent your getting the medical care you need.

* Report the attack to the police; you can call from the hospital if necessary. Don't let anyone discourage you from filing a report or pressing charges. Write down the number of the report form and the names and badge numbers of any police officers you talk with. Ask to see mug shots in case your assailant has a record.

* Don't try to deal with the incident all by yourself. Often after street attacks, victims are disoriented and may have difficulty attending even to simple tasks. *This is normal.* Ask your friends for help in dealing with the police, doctors and the criminal-justice system.

* Even when a victim is not physically hurt, the fear and emotional trauma of an attack can linger for a long time afterward. Many are reluctant even to think about the incident, let alone talk about it, so they suffer in silence. Others, in contrast, may want to rehash it endlessly. Friends should be supportive and patient. If you have been victimized, *talk with someone about it.* Get mad about it. Get it out of your system. If you are having trouble coping, don't hesitate to seek short-term counseling to help you work through it. Get in touch with local support services for Gay and Lesbian crime victims by calling your local Lesbian and Gay switchboard or the NGTF Crisisline [(800) 221-7044 outside New York State, Alaska, and Hawaii; (212) 807-6016 inside those states)].

* Let the Gay and Lesbian and non-Gay and Lesbian communities know what happened to you. If assaults are chronic in your area, channel your rage by working to organize a project to combat them. NGTF will help by putting you in touch with existing local groups, furnishing standard violence-report forms, and providing information about approaches that have been effective elsewhere.

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Clarence Crossman, author of this th's FFO article, having a break during Faith, Fellowship and Order Com- on meeting. Photo by Bev Teagle.

Eucharist in the College chapel.

Have you ever thought of your worship center or church as a nutshell? Your church and your worship should be an expression of the whole universe in a nutshell, the cosmos should be encapsulated there. That is what eucharistic worship is all about. The cosmos is present at our eucharist. That is why our communion is called, in some traditions, the *Great* Thanksgiving: We say to God, "You created the whole universe and every aspect of human life as very good and you celebrate that goodness with us; we thank you.

When you see the bondage of the whole universe and the brokenness in our lives you grieve with us; we thank you. You are at work in the universe and in our lives to heal brokenness and turn things right side up so that goodness will overcome evil - you yearn with us; we thank you.

should be, if it is big enough, becomes a focus of the eucharistic energy of the universe.

So our church gathering is the universe in a nutshell; or at least it should be . . . What happens when our worship center does not encapsulate the cosmos? It becomes instead a world of its own, a world unto itself. That is one of the most damning accusations of the Church and the Church's worship - its lack of connectedness with human life. If the challenge is an accurate one, our worship has failed. This alienation, this lack of connectedness, happens in part because we deliberately leave or have been taught to leave a lot of human life and our own humanness at the church door when we come in to worship.

What are the things that you think should not be mentioned in worship? Whatever it is that you think is not appropriate to be explicitly acknowledged in

ch (in our encapsulation of the life of universe) marks the extent to which have bought into the dualism between sacred and the secular. Such dualisms profound expressions of the brokenness, separation, the estrangement, the ation that are the result of the power vil in our world. If our worship is to er up into itself ALL of creation there othing that should be left outside church doors. Dualism truncates our hip; dualism stunts our growth as aristic people. It prevents us from g how vast worship is, how com- ensive the concerns of worship are. It ls us to the fact that the whole universe orshipping. Our worship concerns then become puny and immature compared to the concerns that God has for us and the concerns of deep and authentic humanness. Dualism keeps us broken; it fights against the healing power of Jesus Christ in our eucharist. Dualism needs to be a focus of our eucharistic confession, grieving and healing process.

Our task is not to attempt to relate our worship as a world unto itself to the world outside the Church door. The whole universe, and all of humanness, already has a eucharistic life and all we have to do is faithfully reflect that eucharistic life in our worship. The more dualistic we are the more we leave at the church door when we come in; the more we leave at the door the less authentically we reflect the eucharistic life of the created order, the less faithfully we reflect God's concern for us, and the more our worship becomes an inauthentic

continued on page 15

Samaritan Sunday

One Sunday in May of each year, MCC's all over the world celebrate our Fellowship's educational ministries by dedicating a worship service and an offering to Samaritan Educational Ministries. This year we ask each church community to join us in this celebration by choosing a Sunday in May as Samaritan Sunday.

This year each MCC will receive a brochure which describes our current programs and a bulletin insert which gives the Dean or Executive Director of each Division and their address. Worship resources are available free of charge upon request from Samaritan College:

Samaritan College
5300 Santa Monica Boulevard
Suite 104
Los Angeles, California 90029

This year has been a very exciting one for Samaritan with several new programs, courses, and materials being made available to UFMCC. We ask you to join in supporting these ministries with your prayers, praises and gifts.

JOURNEY
TO GET
NEW LOOK

In keeping with the other major improvements at the Fellowship Offices, *JOURNEY* Magazine will display a vital, new look in the future. The typesetting will be done on our new IBM Displaywriter, a computerized word processor. We are hopeful that the mechanics of producing *JOURNEY* will be greatly streamlined and less time consuming, leaving us more opportunity to concentrate on the quality and content of *your* Magazine. Enjoy the new look!

Mixed Blessings

Loyce Allison

LET ME GUESS. YOU'RE TAKING D

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What to Do After

* Get medical attention if you need it from the nearest hospital emergency room. Many states compensate victims for injuries sustained during a crime. Find out what benefits you are entitled to; do not let any personal financial constraints prevent your getting the medical care you need.

* Report the attack to the police; you can call from the hospital if necessary. Don't let anyone discourage you from filing a report or pressing charges. Write down the number of the report form and the names and badge numbers of any police officers you talk with. Ask to see mug shots in case your assailant has a record.

* Don't try to deal with the incident all by yourself. Often after street attacks, victims are disoriented and may have difficulty attending even to simple tasks. *This is normal.* Ask your friends for help in dealing with the police, doctors and the criminal-justice system.

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* Let the Gay and Lesbian and non-Gay and Lesbian communities know what happened to you. If assaults are chronic in your area, channel your rage by working to organize a project to combat them. NGTF will help by putting you in touch with existing local groups, furnishing standard violence-report forms, and providing information about approaches that have been effective elsewhere.

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Clarence Crossman, author of this th's FFO article, having a break during Faith, Fellowship and Order Com- on meeting. Photo by Bev Teagle.

Eucharist in the College chapel.

Have you ever thought of your worship center or church as a nutshell? Your church and your worship should be an expression of the whole universe in a nutshell, the cosmos should be encapsulated there. That is what eucharistic worship is all about. The cosmos is present at our eucharist. That is why our communion is called, in some traditions, the *Great* Thanksgiving: We say to God, "You created the whole universe and every aspect of human life as very good and you celebrate that goodness with us; we thank you.

When you see the bondage of the whole universe and the brokenness in our lives you grieve with us; we thank you. You are at work in the universe and in our lives to heal brokenness and turn things right side up so that goodness will overcome evil - you yearn with us; we thank you.

should be, if it is big enough, becomes a focus of the eucharistic energy of the universe.

So our church gathering is the universe in a nutshell; or at least it should be . . . What happens when our worship center does not encapsulate the cosmos? It becomes instead a world of its own, a world unto itself. That is one of the most damning accusations of the Church and the Church's worship - its lack of connectedness with human life. If the challenge is an accurate one, our worship has failed. This alienation, this lack of connectedness, happens in part because we deliberately leave or have been taught to leave a lot of human life and our own humanness at the church door when we come in to worship.

What are the things that you think should not be mentioned in worship? Whatever it is that you think is not appropriate to be explicitly acknowledged in

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Our task is not to attempt to relate our worship as a world unto itself to the world outside the Church door. The whole universe, and all of humanness, already has a eucharistic life and all we have to do is faithfully reflect that eucharistic life in our worship. The more dualistic we are the more we leave at the church door when we come in; the more we leave at the door the less authentically we reflect the eucharistic life of the created order, the less faithfully we reflect God's concern for us, and the more our worship becomes an inauthentic

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FFO

UFMCC's Commission on Faith, Fellowship and Order

WHAT DO YOU LEAVE AT THE CHURCH DOOR WHEN YOU GO IN TO WORSHIP?

This article has been adapted from a sermon preached by Clarence Crossman, FFO Clergy Representative, Eastern Canadian District, at the conclusion of a day-long Workshop on Sexuality and Spirituality which he presented to students and spouses in the Faculty of Theology, Huron College, London, Canada. Huron College was the location of both Clarence's coming-out and training for Anglican (Episcopalian) priesthood before he graduated and arrived home to MCC three years ago.

The workshop was the first exposure for most of the participants to MCC and also the first opportunity most had ever had to reflect on the relationship between their sexuality and spirituality based on their life experience. Many of the tools used had been developed by FFO and the participants and the Dean of the Faculty of Theology sent messages of gratitude to our Commission. The day ended with a Eucharist in the College chapel.

Have you ever thought of your worship center or church as a nutshell? Your church and your worship should be an expression of the whole universe in a nutshell, the cosmos should be encapsulated there. That is what eucharistic worship is all about. The cosmos is present at our eucharist. That is why our communion is called, in some traditions, the *Great* Thanksgiving: We say to God, "You created the whole universe and every aspect of human life as very good and you celebrate that goodness with us; we thank you.

When you see the bondage of the whole universe and the brokenness in our lives you grieve with us; we thank you. You are at work in the universe and in our lives to heal brokenness and turn things right side up so that goodness will overcome evil - you yearn with us; we thank you.

You have culminated this healing and victorious work in Jesus Christ who is both Sovereign of the universe and deeply and fully human - you share our human condition; we thank you. You are going to restore harmony in all creation and establish a quality of life, involving intimacy with you, that is beyond our wildest dreams and yet has a fundamental continuity with human life as we know it - you transform us; we thank you."

There is nothing in human life that is not gathered up into that Great Thanksgiving. The cosmos is present at our eucharist, our "thank-you," when we invite it. The created order joins us because the whole universe is a *eucharistic* universe. The cosmos worships: that is to say, it is a hymn of praise celebrating the goodness of God's creativity; it is wounded by and grieves the dislocation and "turned-up-side-down-ness" that has marred that goodness; (as Romans 8:18-23 asserts) it is hoping and yearning for a restoration of wholeness, and is moving relentlessly towards that restoration with painful motion - like the contractions and writhing of a woman in labour. Our worship, when it is what it should be, if it is big enough, becomes a focus of the eucharistic energy of the universe.

So our church gathering is the universe in a nutshell; or at least it should be . . . What happens when our worship center does not encapsulate the cosmos? It becomes instead a world of its own, a world unto itself. That is one of the most damning accusations of the Church and the Church's worship - its lack of connectedness with human life. If the challenge is an accurate one, our worship has failed. This alienation, this lack of connectedness, happens in part because we deliberately leave or have been taught to leave a lot of human life and our own humanness at the church door when we come in to worship.

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Rev. Clarence Crossman, author of this month's FFO article, having a break during the Faith, Fellowship and Order Commission meeting. Photo by Bev Teagle.

church (in our encapsulation of the life of the universe) marks the extent to which you have bought into the dualism between the sacred and the secular. Such dualisms are profound expressions of the brokenness, the separation, the estrangement, the alienation that are the result of the power of evil in our world. If our worship is to gather up into itself ALL of creation there is nothing that should be left outside the church doors. Dualism truncates our worship; dualism stunts our growth as eucharistic people. It prevents us from seeing how vast worship is, how comprehensive the concerns of worship are. It blinds us to the fact that the whole universe is worshipping. Our worship concerns then become puny and immature compared to the concerns that God has for us and the concerns of deep and authentic humanness. Dualism keeps us broken; it fights against the healing power of Jesus Christ in our eucharist. Dualism needs to be a focus of our eucharistic confession, grieving and healing process.

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Breakfast At McDonald's

by Chris Glaser
Collective Writer

Living alone, one sometimes feels the need to break out of solitude and be with people, even if strangers and the association are seemingly impersonal. When I lived alone, my occasional morning treat was an Egg McMuffin, coffee and people at the local McDonald's. Beneath its heavenly golden arches one looking for a limited communion can find it. The Egg McMuffin and coffee serve as the bread and wine of this unconventional communion, but more essential ingredients are identical to those in church: children of God. The Child of God called Jesus Christ helps us recognize God's children, whether in church or McDonald's. As you might suppose, not everyone is aware of his or her uniqueness as a child of God; but a cause for greater despair is not everyone aware of their own uniqueness recognizes everyone else as a child of God.

Thomas Merton, the Roman Catholic contemplative, once wrote that his retreats in the monastery away from people enabled him to see them with a new vibrancy, as if witnessing for the first time their glory as God's children. Returning from a personal retreat of my own, I breakfasted at McDonald's and discovered myself watching people, seeing them as if a new vibrancy were attached to them. From Dana, the young Black "priest" who smilingly administered the sacrament by handing me my daily Egg McMuffin (this day jokingly inquiring if I wanted to arm wrestle) to the nameless "deacon," an undocumented "alien" and middle-aged bus "boy" from Mexico who speaks no English and whose eagerness to clean off my table had to be warded off whenever I went to the counter for coffee refills, I witnessed a procession of people with whom I shared something deeper than my faith: a common, fragile humanness.

The story of the Incarnation is the story of God willing to share fully in our common, fragile humanness. As God-made-flesh in Christ Jesus, God experiences humanness fully, though we can only experience ourselves and God as "through a mirror dimly." As well, we can only experience another's humanness as through a mirror dimly. How many times have you shared feelings with a friend who said "I understand" and know that she or he can not -- can never -- understand? And yet God can fully understand, for God embraces us all in Christ Jesus. And it is in Christ Jesus we at times may understand ourselves and others as God does.

This breakfast at McDonald's became such a time of understanding, a time of communion. For the most part, the communion went unnoticed because the partakers were busy with their own thoughts, conversations, newspapers, books, food or plans for the day. My hunger for communion with others made me survey the entire McDonald's congregation from the vantage of a corner booth and eyes of faith.

I noticed a young man with a backpack whose mouth attentively focused on his Egg McMuffin while his eyes wandered much as he had probably wandered since he left home. Semi-long reddish-blond hair chose to curl a three-inch length from his head. Any possible smile seemed smothered by serious thoughts, whatever they were. In the mutual wandering of our two sets of eyes, they came to rest on each other: four eyeballs instantly communicating "contact" to their respective brains which as quickly communicated "retreat." Our eyes turned from each other to look at eyes unaware of our vulnerability.

A nervous grey-haired man in his fifties jolted past me as if getting an additonal napkin were the most crucial act of his existence. Returning to his table, napkin in hand, he resumed reading an article in the newspaper about a study on happiness. As he rocked from side to side, a short cigar rolling in the opposite direction from one side of his mouth to the other as if a counterweight, he read that 60% of Americans surveyed declared themselves happy.

Between us, two young women in a booth spoke too loudly, exchanging words but not communicating. They were not angry, but spoke as if their concerns would be of interest to everyone. "Go see if my breakfast is ready," one commanded the other, speaking from a kind of daze a keen ear might associate with taking too many drugs. The other woman obediently returned with her friend's breakfast. "Did you get me a game chance?" the first woman asked, rather too plaintively referring to McDonald's Diamond Hunt Game. "Yes," came the reply. As she took her chance, she said, "Wow -- oh good, now I got 18 chances." With this she pulled out a paper bag from which she dredged a box of tissues, an opened can of cocoa, and her other 17 chances to win a diamond. She spoke of what she'd do "when" she won. Together they discussed money and stars and unlikely dreams. The first hymn came over the muzak: "Send in the Clowns."

The reddish-blond-haired man with a backpack got up to leave, and, as he walked past me, I noticed a limp. He looked at me as if he needed some kind of help, but my eyes, startled again at being discovered by his, turned away for fear he'd think I was cruising him, and for fear he might be cruising me. My ears heard him limp out the door. I wondered what caused the limp, and if he were in pain with it. I found myself wishing there were a way to let him know I was available to help. The second hymn came on the muzak: "What the World Needs Now is Love."

A proper-looking business woman and her young son sat down in the booth next to the nervous man with the roving cigar, and the boy stood on the seat, turned toward the man, pointed to the cigar and

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asked, "What's that?" The nervous man's face twitched excitedly into a smile and he replied softly, "Now that's a cigar." The mother tried to get her son to turn around and sit down and not pester the man. The man returned to reading about happiness.

Two young men were engaged in earnest conversation at a table across from the teenage women. One was clearly more physically attractive than the other. The less attractive one now bent his head down and quietly began to cry, a crying he did not want to come to public attention. His curly-haired, silver-jacketed friend watched him -- perhaps his lover? -- cry. He turned his head, looking around as if for help. I thought, if only I wore a clerical collar, they'd know I was available to help. Then I realized someone in a clerical collar probably would be the last to whom they'd turn. Muzak intoned the theme song from the film ROMEO AND JULIET, the third hymn of the day.

A distinguished-looking middle-aged Black man in a charcoal grey, three-piece suit entered and caught the attention of a young Black man whose unkempt Afro bobbed up from his newspaper to view this study in middle-class Blackness. The man strode past a table of Japanese men and past a would-be actor and actress studying a script, picked up some food, and sat down next to a working-class Black man without saying a word or looking at anyone directly. A sales representative, I thought, taking a break from his travels.

An old Chinese woman smiled at something her younger companion said. Two retired Jewish men were solving the social problems of the day. The middle-class Black man in the three-piece suit struck up a friendly conversation with the working-class Black man near him. The nervous man reading about happiness smiled goodbye to the young boy who was still intrigued by his cigar. The young woman rich in chances for diamonds decided to share half of them with her friend. The silver-jacketed young man reached out a comforting hand to his crying friend, fondly grabbing his forearm and then his hand.

"Have this mind among yourselves, which is yours in Christ Jesus, who, though in the form of God, did not count equality with God a thing to be grasped, but emptied self, taking the form of a servant, being born in human form." (Philippians 2:5-7)

The Christian story is the story of a God who shares with us our common, fragile humanness, the story of a God who shares our experiences and fully understands us, the story of a God who loves us and wants to enter into communion with us – whether at breakfast at McDonald's or over coffee at MCC.

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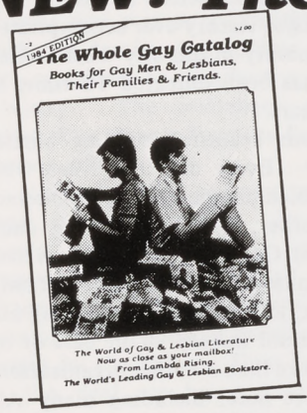
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A VISION BECOMES A REALITY OR MCC STRIKES AGAIN

by Karen Ziegler
Pastor, MCC New York

New York City finally has a Gay and Lesbian Community Center. In September of 1984 the building which now houses the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center will officially become the property of the Lesbian and Gay community of New York. A year ago this seemed like an impossible dream. The good news is that MCC New York began this project, sustained it by hard work and prayer in its earliest beginnings, and continues to be housed in the building.

It all began with two conversations. Marcy Kahn, an amazingly talented lawyer who was then co-chair of our Stewardship committee told me she had been talking to people in City government about the building in which we had our offices. We had been in this city-owned, mostly empty building for two years. Our landowner, Caring Community, had nearly abandoned its dream of creating a community center in this cavernous old high school building. Its location in the heart of Greenwich Village meant that it was prime real estate. Marcy had obtained for the tenants of the building a pro-bonum Wall Street lawyer, and she believed it was possible to find a solution to our space problem that did not include our moving out of the building. Dealing with politicians seemed real intimidating to me and I felt overwhelmed, but Marcy's vision moved me to begin asking a few people if they would work on this.

The following week, an aid to the Manhatten borough president, Tom Burrows, told me at a meeting of the board of the Gay and Lesbian Emergency Fund (GLEF) that we ought to try to make the building a Gay and Lesbian Community Center. Again it felt like a project too overwhelming for me, but the following Sunday at church I announced that any lawyers interested in working on this project should talk to me after church.

This is where the miracles began. I found that *five* lawyers, three of whom I had never even met, were in church that night and were willing to help. We set up a meeting for the following Sunday. Marcy and Tom came to that meeting. The project was off the ground.

The following Tuesday, I got a call from Tom. Caring Community had defaulted on its lease. This meant we had to move very fast. Only one other group, the New York City Community Center, had tried to create a Lesbian and Gay community center in recent years in New York. We were badly in need of their expertise and help. The president of their board of directors, Bob DeDonato, is an active and long-time member of our church. A meeting with Bob and Tom and Art Strickler, a member of GLEF, the Gay Synagogue, and the local Community Board resulted in the planning of what is now an historic event - the first of several general meetings to examine the feasibility of the project and plan strategies.

Fifty people attended that meeting from some 20 local Gay and Lesbian organizations. The next months were a frenzy of phone calls, meetings, appointments with politicians, and scheduling of local groups to meet in what we had already claimed as our Community Center.

The church was the nerve center of the whole operation. (Only last week did the LGCSC get its own phone). Our volunteer office staff, notably Julie Russell, MCC board member and office manager, handled dozens of details and scheduled meeting space for the groups which daily called our office. Louise Avanzato, a deacon of our church, began to fix things in the building. When the city-employed Super quit because he was afraid of catching AIDS, Louise was hired in his place. She is the first woman ever to be hired by the City of New York for the job of Building Supervisor. Her strength and endurance became an inspiration to us all. Her job is to shovel coal by hand into two boilers (made in 1919) to heat 23,000 square feet of space!

Louise was not the only one working overtime. MCC New York kept praying, and volunteers kept coming to us. Architects, engineers, real estate lawyers, fundraisers and political leaders from the Lesbian and Gay community began to work on the project. We became incorporated as the Lesbian and Gay Community Services Center (LGCSC). Soon there were meetings in the building every night in every usable room. In addition to the tenants already in the building at the time the project began (MCC, SAGE: Senior Action in a Gay Environment, Partnership for the Homeless, Friends of the Earth, and Media Network), our community clinic, the Community Health Project, signed a lease with the City and moved in. When I saw them bring in their sheet rock and start building walls, I knew we would have to succeed.

Support grew slowly. Especially in the early days, there was much opposition. Many people said it couldn't be done. Yet for the first time anyone could remember, Lesbians and Gay men came together across lines that had previously separated us. One by one, organization by organization, politician by politician, people caught the dream and did what they could to help make it happen.

On December 31, 1983, the board of the LGCSC went to the Board of Estimate at City Hall. Following an eloquent testimony by Marcy (now chair of the board of LGCSC) and some inarticulate "religious" opposition, the Board voted *unanimously* to sell us the building according to the terms our highly skilled negotiating team had accomplished. It was a moment of great joy. The next night our first major fundraiser netted $23,000. This is the first major victory ever accomplished by our community in this city where a Gay Rights Bill has been defeated 10 times in the last 12 years.

Today our beautiful building bustles with activity. Every day it is filled with Gay and Lesbian people helping themselves and one another. SAGE has almost daily rap groups for Gay men and Lesbians over 60. MCC sponsors Gay and Lesbian Youth of New York, and dozens of kids hang out here after school instead of in bars or on the street. More than 30 other organizations regularly meet here, including many AA groups.

Last month the LGCSC board approved MCC's proposal for a soup kitchen on the ground floor. We received $2,000 from a city agency for food and $125 from a local

Catholic church for kitchen equipment, due to the diligent efforts of Pat Bumgarder, our student clergy.

This is a story of prayer and of miracles. We in MCC New York have learned that it is possible to bring our unique gifts (faith, vision and prayer) into our community in a way which helps both ourselves and many others. We have also learned that no project is too overwhelming for God.

OLDEST MISSION RECEIVES CHARTER

On Sunday, March 25, 1984, MCC Ventura, CA was officially chartered by UFMCC. Rev. Elder Nancy Wilson preached a challenging sermon and installed the church membership of 43. Southwest District Coordinator, Rev. Judy Dahl, led the communion service and participated in installing the Pastor, Rev. Frank W. Scott. Eighty-four members and friends gathered for the occasion, celebrating with a reception following the worship service.

MCC Ventura, the oldest mission in the Fellowship, will be 12 years old in June. Originally begun in 1972 as a ministry in Santa Barbara under the leadership of Rev. Ron Pannell, the group moved to Ventura in Spring, 1974, during the pastorate of Rev. Jim Harris, restyling itself MCC Santa Barbara-Ventura. In the Fall, 1974, the tiny, struggling congregation received its new name, MCC Ventura, and its new worship coordinator, Rev. Virgil Scott.

Despite the best efforts of Rev. Scott and Rev. Richard Mickley who succeeded him, the growth of the congregation was erratic. Its faltering ministry led to the decision by the Board of Home Missions to close it in the Fall, 1979. Rev. Marge Ragona was sent as a caretaker to accomplish the demise, but finding signs of life, she remained to conduct a resurrection ministry. The revitalized congregation called Rev. Frank Scott as Pastor in September, 1981.

Growth during the past two and a half years has been steady. In addition to Sunday evening worship service, MCC Ventura sponsors a lay-led Prayer and Sharing Group which meets on Monday evening, and Thursday evening Bible study taught by the Pastor. Plans for a ministry to the deaf are being made by several members who are studying sign language. The church is united in its awareness that, following a long, stormy passage from birth to charter status, they have just begun to explore the opportunities for ministry.

Rev. Frank Scott, pastor of MCC Ventura, with Rev. Virgil Scott, a former pastor of the church, to his right.

EIGHTH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

"Let's do something unusual this year." St. John's MCCers were in agreement. We all wanted to do something to show our deep appreciation for the special relationship we have with the Community United Church of Christ. "We have used their facilities almost from the beginning," stated Vicki Landes, Board Member and coordinator of the anniversary celebration committee. "We need to be original and innovative."

"Why not begin the celebration on Saturday by giving the gift of ourselves?" suggested a committee member. "We could offer a work-day of cleaning, painting, or doing to the building what seems to be needed."

"Do you mean actual physical labor as part of our celebration?" someone asked. "That sounds strange to me!"

The seed, thus sown, grew and blossomed. On Saturday, February 25th, 20 MCCers rolled up sleeves and spent six hours in a labor of love. A sparkling kitchen, polished bathrooms, painted hallway and glistening windows greeted CUCC's Sunday morning worshippers.

St. John's worship began that afternoon with an air of excitement and expectation. We were not disappointed! From singspiration through Holy Communion, 95 Spirit-filled Christians joined in joyful worship. CUCC's pastor, the Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte, South Atlantic's District Coordinator the Rev. Michael Piazza and a group from St. Mary's MCC, Greensboro, NC, were among the guests.

In her message, "Come to the Banquet," pastor June Norris reminded her listeners

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J. Allen Kelderman presents love offering to Rev. Cally Rogers Witte at St. John's MCC 8th Anniversary.

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that while we are enjoying the banquet of Jesus' love and support of sisters and brothers in the church, we have barely touched the surface of need within our communities. She said, "Jesus once mentioned in a parable we need to go out into the highways and byways and compel others to come in. That compelling force is LOVE. When others see the loving ways of Christians, they want to participate in the banquet."

Immediately following worship, the celebration continued with a pot-luck-banquet and program. The Rev. Piazza reported on the state of the District and shared a beautiful optimistic message of hope for each of us. "Our lives are determined by our choices," he stated. "Many years ago God's prophet told the children of Israel they could choose blessings or a curse and the former was life. Our God wishes each of us to choose life."

J. Allen Kelderman, Clerk of the Board, recalled a rainy night on February 29, 1976, when he cautiously approached an apartment building on Morgan Street. He had come in response to a flyer he had seen in a Gay bar 23 miles away. As he waited for someone to come to the door, he told us, he was wondering if this were truly a Bible study for Gay/Lesbian Christians or a clever new way of making sexual contacts. When a tall, softspoken man answered his knock, Jay soon learned that, indeed, the Rev. Willie White and Robert Pace were interested in Bible study. From this modest beginning evolved St. John's MCC.

As our only original member (Robert and Willie are now in New York as founders of MCC Rochester) Jay was also chosen to present St. John's love gift to the Rev. Cally Rogers-Witte. "Lest you think we have lost our minds," he told her, the odd amount of $541.77 represents our weekly budget. Since there are 53 Sundays this year, we wanted you to have the 'extra' week's budget."

"We rarely receive such a lovely windfall," Cally responded. "It will probably be used on the building." She also informed us CUCC considers our relationship as a partnership. She praised our people for their responsible ways of caring for the facility and their willingness to cooperate. "The only negative note I have ever heard," she continued, "is sadness for the necessity of having two separate churches."

To the strains of "Blest Be the Tie," tired but happy celebrants went their separate ways, already making plans toward making next year's anniversary celebration "unusual."

Singing at the St. John's celebration (L to R) John Swetnam, Jay Kelderman and Vicki Landes. The floral arrangement called "The Rainbow of God's Promise" was designed by Ian Smith.

EXCEL GOES TO EUROPE

by Keith Apple
Director

EXCEL is growing faster and farther in 1984 than anytime in its history. God is opening doors almost faster than we can walk through them. Already this year, weekends have been held for the first time in Washington state and Colorado. Florida and Maryland are planning their first weekends.

EXCEL is going to Europe, too. The last weekend of July, MCC members from around Europe will gather in England to experience EXCEL. USA EXCEL Team members are paying their own expenses to take EXCEL to our European sisters and brothers.

Please pray for all EXCEL Teams as they continue to donate their own time and money to take the message of Prayer, Study, and Action to others. If you want information about EXCEL or wish to donate money towards supplies or scholarships for the European weekend, please contact Keith Apple, EXCEL Executive Director, 2 Valley Circle, Mill Valley, CA 94941. (415) 383-6041.

SHARE YOUR "GOOD NEWS" WITH OTHERS

JOURNEY would like to feature some human interest stories in the future. Has some individual or group in your church gone out of their way to be of Christian service? Had a unique or interesting ministry? Deserve to be recognized for their selfless and giving attitude? Please let us share it with others. Submit material to: *JOURNEY* 5300 Santa Monica Boulevard, Suite 304, Los Angeles, CA 90029.

MARC ALAN LEHMAN
HAPPY BIRTHDAY MARC

MARK ALAN LEHMAN

We love you and miss you.
Please let us know that you are safe.
God bless you.
Mom, Ron, Beth, Dan
Charcoal and Jeanne

MARC ALAN LEHMAN
SS No. 191-48-3083
Date of Birth: 5/16/57
Height: 5'6" Weight 150
Hair: Brown Curly
Eyes: Green
Scar: 1" Vertical center of forehead
Religion: Baptist
Occupations: Farming-Construction-Barbering
Phone Nos. to Call:

(717) 252-2217 - Collect - (Pennsylvania)
(805) 487-7209 - Collect - (California)

Marc - You can call Spiritual Life & Clergy Care to talk with Rev. Nancy Radclyffe: (213) 465-4227

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world unto itself.

But one of the strongest and deepest dualisms is that between sexuality and spirituality. If we are going to leave anything at the church door it is apt to be our sexuality. The tragic results are double-edged. Our sexuality is denied an authentification it needs and deserves but our worship is denied authenticity as well. We need to ask with James Nelson and others, "How can our sexuality inform, authenticate and enrich our worship?"

I have a confession to make. When I was in my mid-teens and bored with my father's sermons I used to look through the hymnbook with a friend for sexual innuendos. There were a lot of them. We did a lot of snickering. The attitude I had was not admirable but the fact that I found what I was looking for should not be surprising nor disturbing. And the fact that something pervasive like sexuality was such a preoccupation of mine did not receive any acknowledgement in worship (except in veiled negative remarks) *should* be surprising and disturbing.

Our sexuality is so powerful and pervasive that it influences our worship and the way we express our worship whether we are aware of it or not. Let us be aware of it, celebrate it and enrich and authenticate our worship by acknowledging the great power and potential for spirituality and divinity within our sexuality.

We have many role models to lead us: the Bible is full of sexual illustrations of God's relationship with God's people. There are spiritual directors and mystics of every age who deepen spirituality through sexuality - it is just that they do not get any where near as much press as the rule-makers.

The more we use our bodies in worship the more sexual it is going to be. The more imaginative, artistic and creative our worship is the more sexual it is going to be. The more faithfully it reflects God's concern for us the more sexual it is going to be. The more faithfully it reflects deep human concerns the more sexual it is going to be. The more it explores the beliefs of orthodoxy, such as the Incarnation and the resurrection of the body the more sexual it is going to be. The more it probes the deep mysteries of our faith the more sexual it is going to be. A worshipping community that celebrates the fact that it is the Body of Christ and the Bride of Christ, and receives the Body and Blood of Christ as a sacrament, and at the same time tries to ignore the fact that it is also a sexual community is bound to have twisted worship and twisted sexuality. We cannot escape the sexual nature of worship; it should be celebrated.

If our worship is authenticated by explicitly acknowledging its sexual nature, it will in turn authenticate us as eucharistic persons in every aspect of our lives. If this church is a nutshell then it is also a womb, and our departure after every eucharist is a birthing. We have received new life and are to live out that new life in the world. If we have dualistically attempted to leave aspects of our humanity to wait outside the doors so that they are not incorporated into the new life we have received, our growth will be stunted. That new life will be like good seed struggling against weeds, or new wine poured into old wineskins, or a patch of beautiful new cloth sewn onto a garment that is decaying.

Is your worship center a vibrant nutshell for you or is it an empty shell? Is there anything that would make you uncomfortable if it were explicitly acknowledged in church? Are you trying to leave any part of yourself or your life at the door when you come in to worship?

ffo

FFO representatives will be writing articles regarding a Christian Theology of Sexuality to be published in *JOURNEY*. These articles are the opinion of the individual author and do not represent the opinion of FFO.

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Metropolitan Community Church

MELBOURNE, AUSTRALIA

FULL-TIME PASTORAL VACANCY

The Melbourne area with a population of about 3 million provides an opportunity for a mature experienced MCC Pastor to lead a dedicated MCC Church into further outreach. The Church has an active membership of 50 on the roll and the Congregation is about one-third female and two-thirds male. The Church is near the central city area and is close to public transport. The Pastoral Package is to a value of $18,460.

For additional information contact: Dr. Duane L. Eaks, Pulpit Committee Chairperson,

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happy mother's day

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